

**Elgin Middle School
Elgin Public Schools
Elgin, Oklahoma**



A “Handprint Alley” showcases handprints and signatures from members of each graduating class from Elgin Middle School, alongside faculty caricatures and framed tee shirts with student-inspired slogans. These touches reinforce Elgin’s 3 R’s—the relationships, rewards, and recognition that engage students and propel their academic success.

Elgin uses a tangible reward system—“Owl” tags—abundantly to recognize students, strengthen teacher-student relationships, deepen student engagement in academics, social development, and extra-curricular activities. “When you get to their hearts, their heads will follow,” notes a faculty member. Former principal Sammy Jackson explains, “We used to lose a lot of middle schoolers because this is the point where they are mature one day, immature the next. We want to make learning fun, want to make participation cool, so they want to come to school every single day. When they leave us for high school—when their maturity has kicked in—they have a future, a purpose and a goal.”

Academic rigor is the fourth “R” at Elgin. Every student takes Reading in addition to English Language Arts, generating, Mr. Jackson says, higher test scores, more competent students in English, and better readers at every grade level. Flexible scheduling increases instructional time and accommodates tiered instruction. Full inclusion means that Elgin students with special education needs and students who are gifted and talented receive instruction side by side in classrooms through co-teaching. Teacher-designed lessons tap students’ kinesthetic, visual, and auditory learning styles; hands-on science and rich technology resources are further points of student engagement. In addition to the core curriculum of English, reading, math, science, and social studies, Elgin offers physical education, vocal and instrumental music and band, technology education, personal finance, fine arts, and foreign languages—among them, the Kiowa and Comanche languages.

Winning the Blue Ribbon School award garnered a great deal of positive attention for Elgin and enables its teachers and administrators to share what they have learned about capturing middle school minds and hearts with other educators in Oklahoma and beyond.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Current Principal: Chris Garner
Former Principal: Sammy Jackson (2003-2011)
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STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

516 students, 5 – 8

White	72%
American Indian or Alaska native	16%
Hispanic or Latino	8%
Black or African American	3%
Asian	1%
Student mobility rate during the past year	14%
Limited English proficient students	0%
Students eligible for subsidized meals	43%
Students receiving special education services	13%